

Recycling and Refuse Management Committee Minutes

Feb. 14, 2008

Present: Susan Waite, Recycling Coordinator; Meg Vickery, RRMCM Chair; Harvey Allen; Marianne Lorenzelli; Clare Bertrand; Lucy McMurrer; Hwei-Ling Greeney, Select Board Member; Sue Carin, potential RRMCM member; Adrie Lester, owner Wheatberry's Bakery, (cameo appearance by Ella); Sterling Bush, Transfer Station employee.

The official November minutes and unofficial January notes were accepted without changes.

Updates:

Waste Haulers: Last year's haulers are all approved and have agreed to the new contract Susan sent out. The next step is to identify haulers operating in Amherst without licenses (Committee members should be vigilant about this). Sterling Bush mentioned there are haulers who owe money to the Transfer Station. She will provide a list of those haulers to Susan for further action.

DEP Grants: The rain barrel discounts from the Department for Environmental Protection *just* came through. This may mean that the truck grant will also be given to us. Susan previously thought because we'd heard nothing and it was so late, we had been denied the truck grant.

Presentations:

Transfer Station: Sterling Bush discussed the need for plastic packing peanut and bubble wrap recycling. There is a need for (a) a 40' container for storing those items at the Transfer Station, (b) a list of businesses willing to take those items, and (c) information regarding grants which could help with their recycling. Meg mentioned she may have a connection at the Wellesley recycling center who could advise us regarding this. Susan said she could ask the DEP employee (whose assistance we get through a grant) for help also. Sterling continued that the Take It or Leave It and Book Swap tables at the Transfer Station need volunteers. Perhaps RRMCM members could staff the tables?

Earth Day: Adrie Lester spoke next to the group about Earth Day, officially Tuesday, April 22, but commemorated Saturday, April 19 (coincidentally Hazardous Waste Day, as well). Traditionally this has been combined with Extravaganja but due to fiscal issues, Earth Day celebrations will be separate this year. Last year Earth Day was cancelled in town and this year Adrie was hoping to get more town action. She would like to see more business involvement, posters in downtown establishments, businesses touting their earth-friendly actions, reusable bags with artwork from the runner-up in the RRMCM sticker art contest, etc. The purpose of this is to mainstream recycling and earth-friendly shopping practices. Adrie'd like to tout what businesses do, encourage them to do more, and educate the public about this issue.

Some Amherst businesses will be giving out seedlings (Cows), showing environmentally related films (Amherst Cinema), and distributing rain barrels (DPW). Hwei-Ling Greeney added that shopping downtown can decrease one's environmental footprint in addition to supporting local businesses.

Hwei-Ling and Susan will discuss how to get an Earth Day banner up (perhaps support from local banks?). In addition, a WFCR or Daily Hampshire Gazette story could help highlight Earth Day to the community. Sue Carin will contact the Gazette.

Future Projects/Goals:

Marianne knows of a potential committee member (UMass student) who may be able to attend the next committee meeting. Also Adrie, Sterling, and Sue Carin were invited to become members.

In closing, members should come to our next meeting with ideas for 2008 committee goals. Possible future projects could include:

- MassRecycles Paper Campaign – should we expand on that locally?
- Alternative uses for the old Amherst landfill
- Publicizing RRMC accomplishments (grants received, downtown recycling/trash bins, waste hauler licensing, etc.)
- Partnership with Amherst College recycling truck while town is experiencing budgetary shortfalls
- Resurrecting the town Styrofoam ban

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 13, at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucy McMurrer, RRMC member